Being there: the library as place*

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The value of the library as place is examined in this Janet Doe Lecture. The lecture, which is intended to focus on the history or philosophy of health sciences librarianship, presents an overview of the library as a place in society from ancient times to the present. The impact of information technology and changes in the methods of scholarly publication from print to digital are addressed as well as the role of the library as the repository of the written historical record of cultures. Functions and services of libraries are discussed in light of the physical library facility of the future. Finally, librarians are asked to remember the enduring values of librarianship in planning libraries of the future.

Upon being named the Janet Doe Lecturer, I experienced feelings of surprise, delight, and pure panic. What, I thought, could I possibly talk about for an hour? That the lecture should be about the history or philosophy of medical librarianship was equally daunting as I don't consider myself a historian, even though I majored in history, or a philosopher. So, I decided to take the approach I'm told writers take—to look at my own past experience as a basis. I looked back into the mists of time at my earliest experiences in libraries, and I realized then that I had spent the first six years of my education in a one-room schoolhouse and did not set foot into a library until the seventh grade! As I recall, there was a bookcase in that one-room schoolhouse with a smattering of books whose titles I do not remember. We learned to read with the usual ''See Spot Run'' books, and I remember fondly *The Little Red Hen* and *The Little Engine That Could,* which my parents bought me. What I recall about these was disappointment at how quickly they were read—they were so short!

I remember going to the library in junior high school and being thrilled with the real books there—long books, and, no, I didn't immediately think, I want to be a librarian! I remember the librarian, Miss Lash, who was criticized for wearing too much jewelry. However, since then, I think I have taken libraries for granted. They have been integral to my education, to my life, and obviously, to my career. Being in libraries and using books has been normal; libraries as places have been ''like home'' to me. I'll bet most of you have had the same experience with libraries, be they school, public, university, medical, hospital—or whatever. Libraries have been an integral part of our lives.

However, times change and the very idea of the library as a place is being questioned. Technology during the last twenty years has had more impact on libraries than it had in the previous two hundred, and it is forcing us to examine this place we call a library. What I want to explore with you today is the idea and value of the library as a place; how it evolved, and what we expect it to be in the future. Try to keep in mind T. S. Eliot's line from ''Burnt Norton'': ''Time present and time past are both perhaps present in time future,'' which kind of reflects how I look at the world [1].

At the University of Maryland Health Sciences and Human Services Library we are in the process of making a rather painful transition from print collections to digital collections while at the same time maintaining a ''hybrid'' collection. Faculty, of course, want every journal online. We recently received the following e-mail from a faculty member and heavy library user: ''Let me make my main point one more time. *We do not need any print versions of any journals.* These are an historic relic from a bygone era. I am sorry to say that we have neither need, time, nor wish to visit the beautiful expanses of the library building. This may be a shock to you, but it's reality.'' This person could have written that now famous article for the *Chronicle of Higher Education,* ''The Deserted Library,'' which caught the attention of many administrators, funding entities, and librarians [2]. But is this really the reality? Are print materials, and library buildings, too, a relic of a bygone era? Will we be relegated to the role of museum artifact?

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ANCIENT LIBRARIES

To set the stage, let's take a little journey back in time to the origins of libraries to trace how they came to be what they are today. Libraries, of course, are a result of the invention of writing. So far as we know, the Sumerians invented writing—cuneiform, which was wedge-shaped writing on clay tablets—about 3000 B.C. in the cradle of civilization, between the Tigris and Euphrates River, now present day Iraq. Archeologists have uncovered thousands of clay tablets in temple storerooms that housed records of land holdings, harvests, and religious writings [3]. The tablets were kept in boxes with labels listing their contents; these were perhaps the earliest reference library, but clearly the room that housed them was not a place for the casual visitor since they sometimes had no door or windows.

The Egyptians housed libraries in temples. The earliest reference to a library dates from a stela in 1788 B.C. However the most famous Egyptian library is that of Ramses II; the entrance had ''Healing—place of the soul'' inscribed above it, a phrase we like to use these days. Unfortunately, most Egyptian writings did not survive because they were written on papyrus and disintegrated. We do have the William Smith Papyrus, named after its purchaser, which preserved the *Secret Book of Physicians,* into which is incorporated the *Book of Surgery,* which describes forty-eight cases and their recommended treatment [4]. An early version of the case report, perhaps? It now resides in the New York Academy of Medicine Library.

Assurbanipal, King of Assyria around 600 B.C., also amassed a huge library in Ninevah of clay tablets, including those that hold the legend of the great flood—the Epic of Gilgamesh [5]. We do not know what kind of facility it was or who had access to this great collection, but likely it was not for the general public. Unfortunately, the Sippar Library, believed to be from this time period, and the oldest known library ever found intact on its original shelves, was stolen or destroyed in the looting after the war in Iraq before it was completely translated and studied. It was simply a casualty of war.

HELLENISTIC PERIOD (300 B.C.–FIRST CENTURY B.C.)

The great library of Alexandria founded in the Hellenistic Period about 300 B.C. is probably the best-known ancient library and the most extensive. The policy of the Ptolemies was to acquire everything; what couldn't be bought was commandeered and copied onto papyrus. The physical facility is thought to have been part of Ptolemys I's palace and consisted of a colonnade with a line-up of rooms behind; the rooms served for shelving the holdings and the colonnade provided space for readers. It was open to the public—that is, open to anyone with scholarly or literary qualifications. To entice intellectuals, Ptolemy I created an ancient version of a think-tank; members were appointed by the Ptolomies for life and had a salary as well as free food and lodging. They were to spend their time on intellectual pursuits [6]. It must have been a wonderful place, a place for book collections and places for people to use them.

The papyrus rolls in the library totaled 490,000, and a smaller library held 42,000. They were organized by the nature of their contents in rooms and then alphabetically by author, one of the great early contributions to library science [7]. Unfortunately, this library met its end starting about 47 B.C. Historians now believe it faded away over a period of years, the result of papyrus's rotting, not through one great conflagration started by Julius Caesar as previously thought. We have no way of knowing what knowledge and literature was lost forever or was rediscovered hundreds of years later.

GREEKS AND ROMANS

What of the Greeks and Romans? Each civilization had libraries; many were private, but there were also public libraries, which were part of the gymnasiums in Greek culture and the baths in Roman culture. Greek libraries were basically stacks with a contingent colonnade for readers.

Roman libraries were designed for readers, with the books nearby in niches in the walls. By 350 A.D., twenty-nine libraries were recorded in the city of Rome; one of the remaining best-preserved libraries is at the Baths of Carracula, Rome [8]. Libraries were open to all Romans, as were the public baths they were a part of.

The Romans were responsible for inventing the codex made of parchment, which replaced the use of papyrus scrolls. Since the codex was flat, it facilitated arrangement of books and made creating a catalogue easier. It took a long time, from about 100 A.D. to 400 A.D., to make the transition from papyrus to codices [9]. Change was indeed slower then! Imagine a transition period of 300 years, while both rolls and codices had to be accommodated in libraries. Little is left of Greek and Roman libraries; the book collections perished mostly from general neglect and the degeneration of the culture.

MIDDLE AGES

During the Middle Ages in Europe, monastery libraries and scriptoria were important in preserving knowledge as well as restricting access to it. Monks were required to read religious texts, and copying of manuscripts was a major activity. Of course, many beautiful manuscripts survive from that time. As libraries grew, it became necessary to provide some form of subject access, so color labeling was employed. For example, green for medicine, red for theology, and black for law [10]. Now you know why so many people ask for the green book! Usually these libraries were housed on the upper floors of the monastery where they were safe from floods and damp and were less prone to burglars. Windows provided light, but gen-

erally there was no heat. Books were valuable and were sometimes chained to the desk or shelf; no candles were allowed because of the fire danger, and lending was generally not allowed [11]. In fact, many monasteries threatened excommunication for anyone who would lend a book [12].

THE PRINTING PRESS

The advent of the printing press in the fifteenth century resulted in books becoming more widely available to the general populace. It took about two hundred years, however, for it to have an impact upon universities, which had had the role of defending orthodoxy in religion and philosophy and educating administrators for the church and state, not to discover new knowledge [13]. The discovery of new knowledge was taken on by academies and learned societies in sixteenth-century Europe, and these began to print a new form of literature—the journal. The first periodicals appeared as early as the seventeenth century. In 1665, *Philosophical Transactions,* the first scientifically oriented journal, appeared [14]. Libraries rarely bothered to collect these early journals. Generally they had no budget for acquisitions and depended upon gifts for their collections. They were generally ornamental, a repository, but not essential to students' education, nor did they provide any services. Moreover, there was no profession of librarianship.

EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF MEDICAL LIBRARIES IN AMERICA

As the scientific method began to be applied to medicine and surgery in the seventeenth century, the role of medical literature became more important. Medicine, once learned through apprenticeship, now shifted to the laboratory and the library.

The first medical library in America was established by the Pennsylvania Hospital in 1763, twelve years after its founding. Funding for the library was based on a fee for students who came to attend the practice of hospital physicians. (For a thorough discussion of the development of hospital libraries, I highly recommend Ruth Holst's 1990 Janet Doe Lecture [15].) Borrowing was restricted to administrators, physicians, and the physicians' students and only two books could be checked out at a time, based upon their size. (So when we joke about arranging books by size and color, there is some history to the idea). Early medical schools also began to establish libraries in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century: the University of Pennsylvania Medical Department, 1785; Harvard, 1782; and the University of Maryland, 1813 [16].

AN EARLY EXAMPLE: THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

The University of Maryland's medical library, founded in 1813, was the thirteenth in America. It was the fifth established by a medical college. Its development as a separate facility and its evolution as an important ''place'' in the context of the university is similar to others in the country, and I'd like to use it as an example.

During the early years of its existence, and for almost 100 years thereafter, the library was housed in the provost's office in the medical college building. By early 1900, it had outgrown that facility and was moved into a church bought to house it, and called Davidge Hall in honor of Dr. John Beale Davidge, the founder of the University of Maryland. It was moved there in 1913, while the building maintained its churchlike atmosphere with the stained glass windows. The librarian's desk stood, appropriately enough, on the platform where the altar had been [17].

The library functioned on the basis of gifts for about its first century, like other libraries of the time. Book budgets were tiny or nonexistent. Was it important as a place in its early days? Indicators are that it was not until about 1914, when a major change occurred The collection was brought out from under lock and key, books and journals were allowed to circulate, and there was a reading room. Hours were from 9:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M., closing early on Saturdays and closed on Sundays. By 1938, it is reported that there were frequently 100 students in the reading room, and it was necessary ''to enforce considerable discipline . . . and as a result there was little time for regular desk work of the library'' [18].

An editorial written in the *Bulletin of the School of Medicine* by the chair of the Library Committee upon the 125th anniversary of the library in 1938 states its importance as a place to the community:

> A library is not a mere repository of books to be visited upon occasion. It should afford an active, vivifying force to the life of the institution of which it is a part . . . The Library is housed in a building possessing both dignity of appearance and convenience of location . . . The reading room is comfortable if not spacious . . . Students are permitted exceptional freedom, perhaps too much, in the use of the reading room . . . One unfortunate drawback is that, owing to the absence of any provision for recreation or restrooms, the reading room is often overcrowded.
>
> The Library itself is unquestionably understaffed as to personnel . . . we do regret our inability in not being able to supply the resident members of the Hospital staff with current and appropriate reading material. [19]

By 1938, the library was receiving 225 medical journals and had 18,500 volumes. The library spent $1,000 to purchase books, and circulation for 1937 was 3,098 volumes. Interlibrary loan service was also introduced, with borrowing from the Army Medical Library, Welch Medical Library at Johns Hopkins, and the New York Academy of Medicine [20].

By 1953, Davidge Hall was overflowing and the other schools (dentistry, pharmacy, and nursing) had developed their own collections. In 1957, the legislature approved $1 million for a new library. In 1960, the new library was completed, and the collections of the individual schools were integrated into one.

The University of Maryland Library in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was not much different from other academic libraries. Physical facilities were generally a room or two in the main building of the institution. The library was intended as a storage room and lacked suitable provisions for study until the latter part of the nineteenth century or the early twentieth. Many of the libraries during these times also had museum-like collections of minerals, coins, and other relics. By 1870, only Harvard, Yale, Williams, and Dartmouth had separate library buildings. Access to collections was usually limited by permits to students; free access was generally not permitted until the early twentieth century [21].

In the twentieth century, the Flexner Report of 1910 made it evident that libraries were an important part of the teaching role of hospitals, and by the 1930s there were standards for libraries in hospitals participating in the training of medical school graduates [22].

The evolution of the library from a ''storehouse'' to an active participant in the educational process and its importance as a place thus was largely a result of the changes in education. European universities, particularly in Germany, made the shift much earlier as the library began to support a curriculum concerned with the discovery of new knowledge.

TODAY'S CHALLENGES

Today, we must respond to changes that are taking place in education, clinical care, and research, as well as in the publication of scholarly information—namely digital publications. We are struggling mightily with how this alters our role and how it will affect our physical facilities. It is as simplistic to say that all print will be replaced by digital texts as it is to say that library buildings will disappear anytime soon.

As Mark Twain once stated, ''The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated.'' Libraries continue to be built and renovated at a good pace. *American Libraries* reports that nationwide expenditures for public library construction and renovation have been between $500 million to $700 million per year for the last six years [23]. Sources of funding have shifted, however, from state and federal (5%) to largely local (87%), with charitable funding coming in a distant second (8%) [24].

In the academic arena, there were 146 new libraries and 148 renovations and reconfigurations between 1995 and 2002. Of these, twenty were health sciences libraries: nine new buildings and eleven renovations [25].

We have all heard plenty about the issues and difficulties of archiving electronic publications and what to do about print collections since current libraries are running out of space. Clifford Lynch, in a recent talk, stated that the most critical issues in a digital archiving strategy are not technical, although these are formidable, but economic, societal, and organizational. One has only to look at the burning, looting, and ransacking of Iraq's National Library and National Museum to see that there are very real concerns. It would be as though the Library of Congress, the National Library of Medicine, the Smithsonian Institution, and the United States National Archives had been destroyed here. Lynch advocates a system of multiple, distributed copies, perhaps across the world, run by autonomous organizations that are motivated to make the archives accessible.

And Lynch is not the first to have these thoughts. In 1791, Thomas Jefferson deplored the damage done during the Revolutionary War to the nation's historical records. He wrote:

> Time and accident are committing daily havoc on the originals deposited in our public offices. The late war has done the work of centuries in this business. The lost cannot be recovered, but let us save what remains . . . by such multiplication of copies, as shall place them beyond the reach of accident. [26]

A major technical issue is to determine which elements of the print journal should be archived; Lynch asserts that the further we get from the standard journal format into other media, the more difficult a digital archiving system will be [27]. The bottom line here is that it may take several decades to devise a workable solution to the archiving problem.

Remember the transition from papyrus scroll to codex during Roman times, which took 300 years? Maybe thirty years is not so long in the scheme of things. Assume, however, that digital archiving difficulties are solved and our libraries stop collecting print. What about the library buildings then? Will we be the museum for these print relics? I think we need to ask ourselves some questions, namely:

- What is the value of the library as a place?
- What is the mission of the library as a place?
- What do users want from libraries?
- What do we, as librarians, want?
- How do we translate values, missions, and desires into a place?

VALUE OF THE LIBRARY AS A PLACE

Over time, libraries have been symbols of learning just as churches are symbols of religion. Beyond all the practical uses of libraries as places, such as a place for staff to work, or a place for students to study or use computers, to meet and discuss a project or research questions, libraries serve as the depository of the written historical record of the knowledge of cultures and civilizations. They are not museums but rather house artifacts that can be read and studied. There is actually a kind of nostalgia associated with libraries today as the talk of their demise has increased. Take note of the attention Nicholson Baker's book, *Double Fold: Libraries and Their Assault on Paper,* got a few years ago [28]. In case you have forgotten, Baker derided librarians for destroying print materials in order to preserve them on microfilm. When the book appeared, the *Washington Post* review, for example, was quite supportive of this point of view. Others decry efforts to bring cafes

and other community activities into the library as not being ''scholarly.'' While I am not advocating these points of view, I can understand that libraries provide a constant to people in a time when change occurs too rapidly to cope with and there is a fear of losing historical consciousness. (Who, by the way, is saving all those emails and Websites for the historical record?) It is a fact that museums are experiencing tremendous growth both in number and attendance [29]. Perhaps we do like going back to the ''good old days'' and feeling a connection with the past.

I am not proposing that libraries be museums, but merely point out that the value of the library as place in the preservation of knowledge, culture, and civilization is important in our society—they are a connection to our collective intellectual past.

THE MISSION OF THE LIBRARY

The physical library can and does convey its mission. Libraries are today, and have been for the last century, certainly more than storehouses; they are service organizations that embody the mission and vision of their institutions. For example, in 1991, when we were planning our new library, the planners at the University of Maryland wanted the new library to serve as

- a physical symbol of the search for knowledge,
- a focal point for the campus and an intellectual commons,
- a haven for study and research,
- a place for groups engaged in collaborative work or learning,
- an access point and distribution center for print and electronic information,
- a teaching library to support trends in education, research, and service,
- a functional and pleasant workplace for staff, and
- an attractive gateway to the campus and a signature building [30]

Of the eight functions, only one deals with the collection. If the library building were not there, what would we have to serve the other seven functions? This brings up the next question.

WHAT DO USERS WANT?

> Libraries are places that embody learning, culture, and other important secular values and manifestations of the common good, and there is a need arising from our common humanity to visit such places. [31]

As librarians we can agree with Michael Gorman, who writes about this idea in his book *Our Enduring Values.* I think it's an interesting statement, because our health sciences users may think we librarians are somewhat schizophrenic since, for at least the last twenty to thirty years, we have done our best to provide them with services so they won't have to come to the library. We have worked hard to achieve ''the library without walls,'' ''the virtual library,'' the ''networked library,'' and ''the scholars workstation,'' where everything is accessible from home or office, or now, on the road via mobile technology. And to a large extent we have succeeded; we have given our users what they want—immediate electronic access, full text, searchable—and they have an insatiable appetite for it. But we have many kinds of users, and not all want the same thing. An overview of recent building articles reveals some of the features users want in their libraries:

- print and electronic resources seamlessly accessible
- group study rooms, 24/7 access
- collaborative work spaces
- computers with email and Web access
- wireless access
- cafes and access to food
- comfy furniture as well as tables
- quiet places, no computers
- natural light
- art galleries
- meeting rooms
- rooms for cultural events
- teaching and learning spaces
- ''beautiful'' and functional space—what has been called ''esprit de place''—space that is transcendent and transporting [32]

This list includes some of the types of space built in recent library buildings today, academic as well as public. And what about the first item, to access print and electronic resources? A recent study indicates that faculty prefer electronic access—no surprise—but they do like their books, and the ''bookness of books'' [33]. They also assume that there will be a print archive ''someplace,'' just in case electronic fails. Students still want a place to be—preferably all night and together. At my campus we are constantly being asked to have a twenty-four-hour study space, and a student survey regarding a new student center put this at the top of the list. A study done at institutions with problem-based learning (PBL) curricula found that students use the library more frequently and for longer periods of time than at institutions with traditional curricula. They also use the library more to study and to meet other students [34].

At the Association of College and Research Libraries' (ACRL) conference this past April, a recent survey of new, expanded, and renovated library buildings completed in the last five years shows that 79% had usage increases and 24% had increases of more than 100% [35]. I'm pleased to say that the University of Maryland's Health Sciences and Human Services Library is one of the latter. What these data suggest is that more modern buildings that have the facilities and amenities that users need or want will certainly be visited. A recent article in *Library Journal* also states that campus libraries are experiencing a ''renaissance'' or a ''post-Internet bounce'' [36]. Features such as cafes, study rooms, wireless access, learning labs, and comfortable furniture were deemed as important as the collections for bringing users to the library and making it a destination, not just a quick stop.

WHAT DO LIBRARIANS WANT?

Yogi Berra, America's baseball philosopher, is reported to have complained, ''The future ain't what it used to be.'' It's interesting and sometimes amusing to look at predictions from times past. We probably all heard the ''540K RAM should be enough for anybody'' quote many times since personal computers were developed. What about predictions about libraries? In 1994, Nina Matheson in her Doe lecture spoke about the idea of the library in the twenty-first century. She stated, ''the twentieth century idea of the library as the repository for second-hand knowledge must give way to the idea of the library as the owner and the librarian as the messenger of first-hand knowledge'' [37]. She believed that in the twenty-first century the library would be a knowledge server, an encyclopedic source of knowledge, encrypting what is known of civilization, culture, and the organization of the universe. She also believed that the library as a place put many barriers before those seeking information and knowledge, and that indexes, catalogs, and other finding tools provided only primitive access to knowledge. I bring this up not to criticize her opinions, but to point out that we have not come very far in the last ten years toward reaching her goal, and, indeed, ''the future ain't what it used to be.'' The past decade has raised additional challenges in our attempt to provide access to information and knowledge and we are still far from being the ''knowledge server'' of first-hand knowledge. Scholarly communication has changed dramatically with the Web and electronic publishing; however, the need for information, knowledge, and ways to access the precise bit needed has not. As Samuel Johnson observed, ''Knowledge is of two kinds: we have a subject knowledge ourselves or we know where we can find information upon it.'' Librarians will likely ''know where to find information upon it'' for some time to come. But, you ask, where does this leave the library as a place? How do we as a profession and as librarians see the libraries of the future?

It is common wisdom when speaking of architecture that form should follow function, so let us look for a moment at some of the roles we expect to play in the future. No doubt the library will continue to be a service organization that contributes to and supports the mission of its institution. In broad terms, we expect the library to be the knowledge center that can accommodate and provide access to both the print and digital scholarly record—probably a hybrid for the next few decades, at least. Beyond that, however, are many functions and services that we want to perform. I use the words ''we want'' because it is up to us to champion them. To name a few:

- provide personalized access and services to users
- provide a variety of access, from desktop to mobile technology
- preserve publications and make them accessible
- provide expertise and training to users for searching, managing, and publishing information
- partner with faculty in curricular support—online Web-based and face-to-face
- extend information services to off-site users, including teaching and instructional services
- filter and organize Web resources
- provide real time, remote reference service
- provide on-site local support to clinicians through informationists
- partner with community organizations to serve the public's need for health information
- provide space for individual study, meeting, and collaborative work
- provide access to food and comfortable furniture
- be a social hub for the institution and support cultural events.
- provide space for collaborative staff work, building integrated service systems for true one-stop shopping.
- have less emphasis on traditional tasks such as circulation, shelving, ILL, on-site reference and computer-lab teaching

I could go on, but you're probably thinking there's not much new here! In fact, this list closely matches what users want! But think about the place that would accommodate all these activities. Over the last century, the profession of librarianship has helped to shape library buildings by emphasizing new functions and services. This is evident in the design of many libraries. I hope librarians will continue this trend because a library building does, in fact, house the community of people who provide or support its various functions; it also gives identity to the people, activities, and services it supports. Ranganathan's Fifth Law of Library Sciences states that ''the library is a growing organism'' [38]. One can interpret this to mean that the library is subject to change and must be flexible to accommodate change. It does not mean all tradition must be tossed out, but rather that we must find a way to incorporate the old and the new in a rational manner. It brings to mind again the T. S. Eliot line: ''Time present and time past are both perhaps present in time future'' [39].

Our experience shows that the Web and the Internet have not made public physical space obsolete for people. People need and want contact and interaction; otherwise we wouldn't be here today! What we must do to fill this need is to design our libraries to merge virtual space and physical space; to create a ''convergent architecture'' that uniquely matches form to the functions of our future libraries [40]. For example, we should provide information access with mobile technology—the virtual—in spaces with comfortable furniture and perhaps access to a cappuccino—the physical. We should ensure that group study rooms—the physical—have connectivity to electronic curricular resources, or, as the National Library of Medicine has proposed for its new building, to ''collaboratory,'' a space where scientists from across the globe, research staff, and medical librarians can work together in a space where face-to-face collaboration can be combined with people-to-computer interactions.

CONCLUSION

In looking back over the millennia, we see that the value of the library as a place has evolved. The libraries of antiquity existed because of the wishes of kings or priests and served their purposes. The Greeks and Romans had an early sense of libraries for public use, but this idea did not extend into medieval times when libraries served monasteries and cathedrals. Early universities paid scant attention to the library as a place except for storage. Not until the scientific revolution, when discovery and knowledge became the purpose of the university, did the library as a place take on value. Early medical libraries in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were established to meet the needs of the physician, scholar, and student, but they certainly were not regarded as the ''indispensable engines for the advancement and dissemination of knowledge'' for which they became recognized in the twentieth century [41].

What will twenty-first century libraries be like? I believe it is the responsibility of librarians to guide the design of the library; we must advocate strongly the role for the library beyond the ''storage facility,'' and even the ''access facility,'' and focus attention on the many other place-centered activities and services that the library can support. The integration of technology into the very fabric of the library is of paramount importance, and while librarians cannot predict changes in technology better than any others, we can develop a civilized relationship between humans and technology [42]. Working alongside architects and the library's stakeholders, we can design places that are uplifting as well as functional, and that bring together users with the knowledge and information they need. Libraries can be that ''vivifying'' force described more than fifty years ago.

Even though I do not believe that libraries as physical entities will vanish, their form surely will change. It behooves us, therefore, to pay attention to the enduring values of librarianship so eloquently expressed by Michael Gorman: stewardship, service, intellectual freedom, rationalism, literacy and learning, privacy and democracy [43].

As health sciences librarians, we should champion values even more specific to our environment, as has been suggested by the Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries: timeliness, accuracy, creation of new knowledge, improving the quality of health care, and the library as place.

My purpose here is not to recommend specific design ideas for libraries, but to examine the value of the library as place. Imperfect as they may be, libraries are cultural institutions and, as such, reflect the values not only of our profession, but of our institutions and our society. We should work hard to design libraries to fulfill the overarching vision of our free society.

As I mentioned earlier, I took libraries for granted for a very long time, but as I ''totter toward antiquity'' in the twilight of my career, I realize how fragile libraries are and how precious being there, in that place called a library, is. In the immortal words of Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young, ''Our house is a very, very, very fine house'' [44].

Before I close I would like to share with you a brief pictorial history of the library as place.†

Thank you for your kind attention.

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† The pictorial history can be viewed at http://www.hshsl.umaryland.edu/fweise-mla-2003.zip.

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